

A City for All Londoners

South London Partnership response to the Mayor of London's consultation

1. Introduction

The South London Partnership (SLP) is a sub-regional collaboration of five London boroughs: Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton. Through collaboration – between ourselves and with local public, private and voluntary and community sector partners – the South London Partnership is committed to accelerating and increasing the potential for economic growth in this area, beyond what we can achieve individually.

The SLP welcomes the chance to respond to A City for All Londoners and identify where it can help the Mayor and the SLP boroughs work together to unlock economic growth in south London.

The SLP's response focuses on five key points:

- Outer London is strategically important to the capital not just as a residential area for those working in the CAZ but as an economic contributor in its own right providing important opportunities for businesses and workers
- Creating sustainable successful communities in outer London while accommodating growth requires a balance between housing and economic development
- Improving transport is key to unlocking further development opportunities in South London
- The social infrastructure of south London is a key asset providing a quality of life that is attractive to both residents and businesses
- It is critical that we think beyond GLA boundaries and consider the economic and social interactions with neighbouring counties and how they affect the capital.

2. The South London Partnership

The SLP covers a vibrant sub-regional economy, already worth £28 billion and home to 1.1 million people. It has extremely high skills levels with 51% of residents being educated to degree level or above. It is also a very supportive environment for new businesses with six times the average number of London start-ups and, at 93%, a better survival rate after four years than the London average.

Our priorities for collective action to address these constraints and enhance the economic potential of south London on the national and world stage are:

1. **A programme for economic growth** – SLP will bring together businesses from key sectors (tech, life sciences and sports sciences), with research and education providers and other partners to develop a programme of work to support economic growth.
2. **Skills for Jobs** – SLP will seek devolution of skills commissioning to enable us to better meet business needs and strengthen the pathways through education and learning into jobs.

3. ***Making the links*** – securing investment in transport infrastructure and improvements in services to address congestion, link workers to jobs and maximise the potential of our location, and secure the wider infrastructure to support growth
4. ***More than the sum of the parts*** – establishing new ways of working with business and other partners to maximise the potential of sub-regional growth sectors and to attract inward investment and tourism. Our goal is a sub-regional LEP with funding to support this. We will also seek opportunities to use our business strengths to improve public services.
5. ***Making best use of our space*** – protecting and enhancing land for jobs, while securing affordable housing to support our growing economy, including through collaborating on opportunity areas as the focuses for development and unlocking public estate.

3. South London's Strategic Importance

South London has a critical role to play in the capital's economic future. It currently houses a £28 billion economy with great opportunities for growth which can support and alleviate pressure on the CAZ.

We recognise that the continuing growth and success of the CAZ is crucial to London's future and support plans to make transport into the CAZ easier for those living in outer boroughs and beyond. However only 18% of SLP residents commute into the CAZ for work and it is important that a plan for all Londoners recognises the importance and benefit of strategic employment locations within the outer boroughs to provide opportunities to those looking to work outside the CAZ and reduce congestion within it.

Some of south London's growing specialisms demonstrate the advantage of strategic employment space outside the CAZ; the existence of a life sciences hub based around the London Cancer Hub provides a viable alternative within London for developers discouraged by the lack of opportunities to create the necessary specialist workspace in the CAZ. It will also provide affordable space for SMEs.

Similarly the rapid growth of Croydon Tech City, London's fastest growing tech start up cluster, and other significant developments such as Wimbledon Tech Hub are indicative of the value of hubs outside the CAZ. These hubs can more easily provide solutions to the questions of workspace and broadband connectivity that threaten to stifle central London's technology hubs. Providing alternative bases with different strengths adds to the capital ecosystem and makes the city as a whole more attractive to invest in.

We welcome the announcement during the Autumn Statement of devolution of the adult education budget to London and are developing subregional arrangements to play a key role in delivering the skills needs of south London. We hope that the Mayor will continue to make the case for further devolution from Whitehall on skills and employment including all 16-18 education funding being devolved to London. And across the devolution agenda we

ask that the Mayor articulate explicitly where he could devolve his powers to boroughs and sub-regions.

Our goal for devolved power is a sub-regional LEP to lead the economic growth of south London. We ask the Mayor to include sub-regional representation in the refreshed London Enterprise Panel and other pan-London bodies (e.g. Homes for Londoners and Skills for Londoners) and explore the potential of devolving powers and funding to sub-regional arrangements where that can best drive growth opportunities

4. Balance of housing and economic growth

Delivering ‘good growth’ requires acknowledging the inter-dependency between housing and employment space and the need for an appropriate balance between the two in order to create sustainable communities while accommodating growth.

We recognise the potential for new housing developments to regenerate some existing town centres. But some of our town centres are already important hubs for particular industries and it is important that this is supported. Recognising existing successful town centres, particularly those with strong transport links, as opportunities not just for housing but also commercial hubs will provide more workspace options for businesses wishing to be based in London but for whom the CAZ is not suitable. This can ensure that businesses looking to move from start-up to follow-on space can remain within London rather than being forced to move to other towns and hence lose some of their crucial connections with the capital.

There are already ambitious plans in parts of south London for accommodating growth and we welcome the commitment to small scale housing development appropriate to suburban locations. SLP is working closely with the One Public Estate team, having secured funding for sub-regional work in this area, to utilise public assets and is keen to work with GLA bodies on this.

5. Critical role of transport

Crossrail 2 is of great significance to the SLP, not just to the boroughs which will be on the route but to neighbouring boroughs which can connect quickly to it opening up town centres across the subregion; We welcome plans to explore expanding the Tramlink network from Wimbledon to Sutton as part of improving the orbital connections necessary to make outer London hubs viable. It is also important that planning for Crossrail 2 does not create blight or disincentives for development of growth opportunities in the shorter term for the purposes of building up the Crossrail 2 case for later development.

DfT’s rejection of rail devolution is disappointing. We believe strongly that the metroisation of rail journeys in south London is crucial to its continued development and to the general effectiveness of travel in London. In particular there is a need to provide better systems and stock for managing dwell time, crowd control and optimal timetable run-times. We hope that the Mayor and TfL will continue to build the evidence base for working with stakeholders to deliver metroisation improvements in south London as it is critical to the

functioning of transport in London regardless of ownership. SLP is keen to play an active role in this.

We note that for many of our boroughs, buses are the principle means of public transport provided by TfL. Two of our boroughs have no access to London Underground or Overground services at all and all are only lightly served. For this reason we ask that special consideration is given to how bus provision is provided in these areas more dependent on it.

SLP is very supportive of the Mayor's Healthy Streets agenda and its support for cycling and walking. We welcome further detail of this area, particularly for outer boroughs, and note that successful commercial hubs in outer London provide greater opportunities to encourage cycling and walking from local residents.

6. Social Infrastructure

The SLP welcomes the document's focus on the quality of life elements that help make the capital a city for all Londoners such as its proposal for a cultural infrastructure plan.

The mixture of culture, leisure, green space, tourism and nightlife available in south London are crucial to maintaining its key asset: its quality of life. It is crucial that plans for the future maintain and enhance this.

We welcome the Mayor's ambition to promote tourism across the whole capital, including outside central London. The SLP's specialist offer in Sports Sciences and Tourism demonstrate the importance of institutions throughout the outer boroughs in both making London an attractive destination for tourists and for creating natural centres for excellence.

7. Looking beyond GLA's boundaries

When considering London's economic geography, it is crucial to remember its interactions with neighbouring counties. Many residents travel both ways every day for work and leisure and it's important that the full cross boundary impact of infrastructure plans and sector hubs is considered in the London Plan. The region's economy does not stop at the borough boundary but offers jobs and opportunities to Londoners outwards towards Gatwick airport and elsewhere. Close cooperation is also important for tackling issues such as air quality, transport and accommodating growth.

8. Conclusion

The SLP welcomes the ambitions and direction of travel mapped out in the City for All Londoners document. It looks forward to working with the GLA and other stakeholders to ensure that the detailed plans that follow from this, recognise both the needs of residents and the economic potential of south London.